United Nations

Press Release

Department of Public Information • News Coverage Service • New York

Prepared by Central News

DH/845
12 March 1991

TUESDAY HIGHLIGHTS

+ Preliminary mission to assess conditions for United Nations observance of cease-fire agreement between Government and Frente Farabundo Marti para la Liberacion Nacional to go to El Salvador.

+ Commission composed by Italian authorities and representatives of United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees to begin interviews of Albanian asylum seekers to see whether they qualify for refugee status.

+ International Committee of the Red Cross steps up humanitarian assistance in Iraq.

+ Secretary-General of United Nations Conference on Trade and Development calls for special concerted effort to meet all reconstruction needs in Gulf region.

+ Secretary-General names Director-General of Vienna Office as coordinator of activities relating to Chernobyl.

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A preliminary 10-day mission to assess conditions for the establishment of a United Nations Observer Mission in El Salvador will leave Headquarters tomorrow, Wednesday.

The Secretary-General's spokesman told correspondents today that the preliminary mission would present recommendations for an operational plan for establishing a United Nations mission to verify the cease-fire agreement between the Government of El Salvador and the Frente Farabundo Marti para la Liberacion Nacional (FMLN) signed at San Jose, Costa Rica, on 26 July 1990.

The preparatory mission will also present an assessment of the extent to which the verification of the agreement can be conducted in the absence of a cease-fire. It will be headed by Iqbal Riza, Director in the Office of the Secretary-General, and will include human rights experts and military and police advisers. While in El Salvador it will be assisted by the Chief of the small Preparatory Office established in January.

(more)

For information media—not an official record

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A spokeswoman for the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) announced today in Geneva that a commission composed of Italian officials and UNHCR staff was due to begin interviewing Albanian asylum seekers to see whether they qualified for refugee status.

The emphasis was now being placed on helping Albanian asylum seekers, many of whom were in poor physical condition, she said, adding that interviews would be carried out as their health improved.

According to a United Nations press officer in Geneva, almost 20,000 Albanians had arrived in Brindisi, Italy, by sea in recent weeks. Many remained in temporary shelters; some had been hospitalized. She said UNHCR's representative in Rome and Italy's Deputy Prime Minister went to Brindisi yesterday for an on-the-spot assessment of the situation. The two had confirmed, she said, that the 1,500 to 2,000 people who left Italy had done so voluntarily and that they would not be punished once they returned to Albania.

The press officer said that 1,500 Albanians of Yugoslav origin arrived in Yugoslavia in recent days and had been accepted there. Further, 1,200 Albanians of non-Yugoslav origin were seeking asylum in that country, she said.

* * *

The International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) announced today that its objectives for the coming weeks would be to expand its humanitarian activities both in Baghdad and in other parts of Iraq. The Committee said it was working in close cooperation with the Iraqi Red Crescent and with the agreement of the Iraqi authorities. The medical and sanitary needs of the civilian population would be given priority, the Red Cross said, especially with regard to the most vulnerable groups, such as the sick and wounded, children and the elderly.

So far, eight convoys had carried more than 500 tons of emergency relief supplies to Iraq, the Committee said.

* * *

The Secretary-General of the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD), Kenneth Dadzie, has called for a special concerted effort to meet all reconstruction needs in the Gulf region, whether resulting from the recent war or from previous crises and natural calamities.

Addressing the Trade and Development Board's thirty-seventh session which began yesterday in Geneva, Mr. Dadzie said that a new vision was needed in the Middle East -- time had come to view the region in a wider geographical context.

* * *

He proposed a forum to develop economic links in the region, which he said could be funded from national savings, the progressive reduction in military expenditure and external finance.

The UNCTAD Secretary-General also called for appropriate domestic and international action to help other countries adversely affected by the Gulf crisis. This included stronger reform efforts, international cooperation to stimulate vigorous world economic growth, lower interest rates as well as large-scale multilateral financial assistance based on strictly economic criteria. Mr. Dadzie also stressed the importance of dealing with oil-price volatility, preferably through joint efforts by producers and consumers.

* * *

The Secretary-General has entrusted to Margaret J. Anstee, Director-General of the United Nations Office at Vienna and Head of the Centre for Social Development and Humanitarian Affairs, the responsibility for coordinating all activities relating to Chernobyl.

The General Assembly adopted last year a resolution entitled "International cooperation to address and mitigate the consequences of the accident at the Chernobyl nuclear power plant", by which the Secretary-General was asked to coordinate United Nations activities in that regard. He was also asked to establish a task force responsible for stimulating and monitoring such activities and to appeal for voluntary contributions to complement the regular budgetary resources.

Miss Anstee has now established a core secretariat in her office, which is working full-time on activities relating to the aftermath of the Chernobyl accident.

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United Nations

Press Release

Department of Public Information • News Coverage Service • New York

Prepared by Central News

DH/846
13 March 1991

WEDNESDAY HIGHLIGHTS

- Permanent Representative of Kuwait says he will give to Security Council President exact list of missing property items "stolen by Iraq".

- Secretary-General's mission to Iraq and Kuwait to assess humanitarian relief needs continues work.

- United Nations special mission to Kuwait arrives in Bahrain.

* * *

The Permanent Representative of Kuwait, Mohammad A. Abulhasan, said today at a press conference at Headquarters that the Kuwaiti people were now living in the aftermath of 209 days of "brutal Iraqi occupation".

He said he had just returned from Kuwait where he had personally seen the scope of the destruction and devastation and its effects on the people, the economy and the environment. He added that the United Nations mission sent to the area would very soon witness the extent of devastation and ruin.

Mr. Abulhasan expressed concern over the lack of progress in the exchange of prisoners and captives and was alarmed to see that the Iraqi regime was delaying the implementation of Security Council resolutions relating to Kuwait, particularly the ones with regard to prisoners of war. The Iraqi authorities had clearly violated the 1949 Geneva Conventions by not handing over prisoners of war to the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC), he said, adding that only 1,200 prisoners had been released so far.

The Kuwaiti Ambassador said further that the Iraqi authorities were not implementing resolution 686 which, among other things, demands that Iraq return Kuwaiti property. The letter from the Iraqi Foreign Minister informing the United Nations that Iraq was returning Kuwaiti gold and currency, aircraft and museum objects, did not specify the stolen or confiscated quantities. Mr. Abulhasan said that the Kuwaiti Government had a wider list of items that had been looted or confiscated from the country.

(more)

For information media—not an official record

The Kuwaiti Ambassador said he was giving the Security Council President tonight an exact list of missing items and was anticipating to establish liaison with the United Nations Secretariat so that the properties could be exchanged through the Organization.

* * *

The mission sent by the Secretary-General to Iraq and Kuwait to assess the need for urgent humanitarian relief continued its work in Baghdad yesterday and again this morning. It is headed by Under-Secretary-General Martti Ahtisaari.

All joint working groups, consisting of senior Iraqi government officials and members of the mission, made further analyses of available data. They are currently working on plans to make inspection visits to a number of locations in various parts of Iraq outside Baghdad during the rest of the week.

Yesterday, Mr. Ahtisaari met with senior Iraqi and foreign diplomatic representatives. Members of the mission had a working dinner at the headquarters of the International Committee of the Red Cross.

Today, Mr. Ahtisaari inspected several power stations in Baghdad.

Apart from members of the Secretariat, the mission also comprises senior personnel from a number of United Nations humanitarian organizations.

* * *

The United Nations special mission to Kuwait, headed by former Under-Secretary-General Abdulrahim A. Farah, arrived this morning in Bahrain.

Immediately after his arrival, Mr. Farah, accompanied by team leaders of the mission, paid a courtesy visit on Bahrain's Prime Minister, Sheikh Khalifa Bin Salman Al-Khalifa. During the meeting, the Prime Minister strongly condemned the extensive destruction, loss of human life and human rights abuses perpetrated against Kuwait and its people. He expressed his country's appreciation for the United Nations role during the Kuwait crisis, and Bahrain's full support for the United Nations mission. Mr. Farah explained to the Prime Minister the role of the mission and its terms of reference.

Also during the day, Mr. Farah and team leaders had meetings with the Minister of Foreign Affairs of Bahrain, Mohammed Bin Mubarak Al-Khalifa, and the Minister of Information, Tarek Al-Moayyad, who later hosted a luncheon for the whole mission.

The mission is expected to proceed to Kuwait on Saturday, 16 March.

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United Nations

Press Release

Department of Public Information • News Coverage Service • New York

Prepared by Central News

DH/847
14 March 1991

THURSDAY HIGHLIGHTS

- Japan contributes further $9 billion to Gulf Peace Fund set up to support efforts to restore peace and stability in area in accordance with relevant Security Council resolutions.

- Committee on Elimination of Racial Discrimination discusses Second Decade to Combat Racism and Racial Discrimination.

- Government officials representing countries from Latin America and the Caribbean, and from Central and Eastern Europe debate regions' economic transition.

* * *

The Government of Japan has informed the United Nations that it has extended an additional contribution of some $9 billion to the Gulf Peace Fund. The Fund was set up by the Cooperation Council for the Arab States of the Gulf in order to support countries undertaking activities to restore peace and stability in the Gulf region in accordance with relevant Security Council resolutions.

The contribution follows donations from Japan last year amounting to some $2 billion.

In a letter to the Secretary-General yesterday, a spokesman for the Japanese Ministry of Foreign Affairs said the burden of the countries working for the restoration of peace and stability in the Gulf region was exceedingly heavy. He said his Government had made the contribution in recognition of its responsibility to actively contribute to international efforts in that regard.

* * *

The Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination today continued its discussion on the Second Decade to Combat Racism and Racial Discrimination, proclaimed in 1983 by the General Assembly.

(more)

For information media—not an official record

The goals of the Decade are to promote human rights and fundamental freedoms without distinction of any kind on grounds of race, colour or national or ethnic origin, especially by the eradication of racial prejudice, racism and racial discrimination.

In considering the issue, the Committee has before it the reports of the Secretary-General to the last sessions of the General Assembly and the Commission on Human Rights on the implementation of the Programme of Action for the Second Decade.

The Special Committee against Apartheid meanwhile will hold a solemn meeting on 21 March to observe the International Day for the Elimination of Racial Discrimination. The annual observance coincides with the thirty-first anniversary of the Sharpeville massacre when South African police, unprovoked, fired on several thousand demonstrators who were peacefully protesting against apartheid laws requiring Africans to carry passes at all times.

* * *

Economic transformation has been the topic of talks that just ended in Vienna between high-ranking government officials from Latin America and the Caribbean, and Central and Eastern Europe. Initiated by the United Nations Economic Commissions for Europe (ECE) and for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC), the meeting was the first of its kind.

Among the more than 30 participants, the consensus for market economics was clearly evident. They cited the presence of the North American trading bloc and the European Community as major hindrances to the development of free trade in both regions. Delegates also agreed that their dialogue should be continued so that the two regions could cooperate more closely in the future.

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United Nations

Press Release

Department of Public Information • News Coverage Service • New York

Prepared by Central News

DH/848
15 March 1991

F R I D A Y H I G H L I G H T S

- United Nations team of technical experts to go to Albania in an advisory capacity regarding elections scheduled for 31 March.

- Secretary-General appeals for $716.6 million for emergency humanitarian assistance to some 8 million people in the Sudan.

- United Nations Conference on Trade and Development report says least developed countries continue to experience economic slow-down; economies affected heavily by Persian Gulf war.

- World Health Organization mission to leave Geneva for Kuwait and Iraq to help rehabilitate their public health services.

- World AIDS Day 1991 to focus on need to share challenge of combating pandemic.

* * *

A United Nations official announced today that a team of technical experts was to be sent to Albania in an advisory capacity for the elections scheduled for 31 March.

Meanwhile, the United Nations mission to Albania, headed by the Secretary-General's Special Envoy, Stefan de Mistura, has reported that the flight of Albanians to Italy appears to have stopped.

A United Nations press officer in Geneva said today that Albanian authorities had given assurances that laws on punishing illegal exits would not be applied, and that people who chose to return would not be punished.

She said that according to the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) and Mr. de Mistura, an estimated 16,500 Albanians were still in Italy.

Albanian authorities had told United Nations officials, she went on to say, that the people needed assurances to prevent them from leaving the

(more)

For information media—not an official record

country in the future. Those included the availability of food and other development and economic assistance, as well as the possibility to leave legally and to work in other countries. The Albanian authorities said they had already approached various countries for quotas for Albanian migrant workers. They also expressed hope that international assistance would be imminent and as tangible as possible.

The press officer further reported that Mr. de Mistura had appeared on Albanian television to assure the Albanian people, who have been largely isolated for 45 years, that the international community will help them and that the country will no longer be alone. He promised an international commitment to their future economic and democratic development.

* * *

Secretary-General Javier Perez de Cuellar yesterday issued an appeal for immediate international assistance for humanitarian relief assistance to some 7.7 million people in the Sudan, threatened by the drought situation.

He appealed for the provision of food supplies at an estimated cost of $659.3 million, including a component of non-food assistance, at an estimated cost of $30 million, to cover basic health needs, nutrition, water supply and sanitation, relief shelter and basic health. The logistic support costs of this programme are estimated at $27.3 million, bringing the total value of international assistance sought in this appeal to $716.6 million.

* * *

Economic growth in the 42 least developed countries continued to slow down last year, according to a new report of the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD). Some of the poor countries, the report said, had suffered economic consequences due to the conflict in the Persian Gulf.

The UNCTAD reported that the overall economic picture had not improved since 1980 and, in at least 16 of the countries, average annual income had declined in the last decade. Average annual income in the poor countries as a group was slightly above $200, the report said, about a fourth of that in other developing countries as a whole, and 2 per cent of the developed country figure.

The UNCTAD equated the economic deterioration in the least developed countries to the continued decline of international prices for their main exports, and in 1990 to the economic consequences of the Gulf crisis. According to the report, they had suffered from financial shortfalls due to reduced flows of private remittances from nationals previously employed in the Gulf. The tourism crisis, import costs of capital goods and manufactures, as well as reduced aid flows originating from Gulf States were also listed as contributing factors.

The UNCTAD said that Bangladesh, for example, had lost an estimated $1.4 billion as a result of the Gulf crisis. This figure included loss of

(more)

workers' remittances, loss of export earnings, loss of belongings, savings and salaries of Bangladesh employees in Iraq and Kuwait, and the cost of repatriation and rehabilitation of nationals.

Yemen, as another example, had lost about $400 million in workers' remittances. In addition, the Aden oil refinery was believed to have lost about $40 million in 1990 and $220 million this year as a result of the loss of oil shipments from Iraq and Kuwait. Yemen also stood to lose millions in budgetary support, project financing and concessional lending from the two countries, the report said.

Within the general discouraging picture from the least developed countries, UNCTAD noted the strong economic performance of a few -- mainly those exporting non-traditional commodities. It pointed to Maldives, attributing progress there to earnings from fisheries and tourism, to Bhutan due to hydroelectric power, Botswana because of diamonds, and Cape Verde because of transport facilities.

* * *

A World Health Organization (WHO) mission will leave Geneva tomorrow for Kuwait and Iraq to help in developing a comprehensive programme for the rehabilitation of public health services in the two countries.

A United Nations press officer in Geneva said today that the eight-man team would go first to Kuwait in response to a request from that country's Health Ministry for WHO collaboration on finding technical solutions to its most urgent health needs.

She said that according to WHO the major priority was cooperation in mitigating the effect on health of heavy pollution from the burning of oil wells in and around Kuwait City. The experts were specialists in emergency relief operations, disease prevention and control, pharmaceuticals, environmental health, community water supply and sanitation, and research and training in the control of tropical diseases.

* * *

World AIDS Day on 1 December 1991 will focus on the need for individuals, groups, communities, and nations to "share the challenge" of combating the AIDS pandemic. This year's theme was announced today by the Director-General of WHO, Dr. Hiroshi Nakajima, who said that no country could combat the disease in isolation. Preventing the spread of HIV, caring for those affected, and minimizing the social and economic repercussions of the AIDS pandemic all required the strength that came from partnership, he said.

The WHO stated that as of 1 March, some 340,000 diagnosed cases of AIDS had been officially reported to the organization. Of those cases, Africa accounted for some 84,000; the Americas, 199,000; Asia, almost 1,000; Europe, some 47,000; and Oceania, some 3,000. The WHO estimated that those figures were only one third of the existing AIDS cases. In addition, it said, between 8 and 10 million adults were infected with HIV.

World AIDS Day has been observed each year on 1 December since 1988.

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United Nations

Press Release

Department of Public Information • News Coverage Service • New York

Prepared by Central News

DH/849
18 March 1991

MONDAY HIGHLIGHTS

- United Nations special mission holds sectoral discussion with Kuwaiti officials; visits sites critical to its mandate. Humanitarian mission sent by Secretary-General arrives in Kuwait.

- United Nations Environment Programme action plan approved to survey and assess environmental damage of Iraq/Kuwait conflict.

- Second round of preparations for 1992 Conference on Environment and Development begins in Geneva.

- Director-General of Food and Agriculture Organization says food must be safe anywhere in the world and traded more freely.

* * *

The United Nations special mission has now commenced detailed sectoral discussions with its Kuwaiti counterparts and has made a number of on-site visits to areas within Kuwait City critical to the mission's mandate. Yesterday, 17 March, the mission conducted a four-hour survey of the city by road and spent some time at sites that were either destroyed or heavily damaged and vandalized. The latter included government buildings, commercial centres and the country's leading scientific and research institute.

The Kuwaiti authorities are giving the mission their full support and cooperation. However, because of the unsettled conditions prevailing as a result of the occupation, the mission is encountering difficulties in discharging its task due to the absence of an effective internal telecommunication system, an extreme shortage of transport and the unavailability of essential records and data which have either been destroyed or are missing.

Meanwhile, the mission sent by the Secretary-General to Iraq and Kuwait to assess the need for urgent humanitarian relief arrived in Kuwait Saturday, 16 March, by a special aircraft provided by the Kuwaiti Government. The mission was received at the airport by the Kuwaiti Minister of State for Foreign Affairs, Nasser Mohamed Al-Sabah, and other senior officials.

(more)

For information media—not an official record

Soon after arrival, a preliminary meeting took place between a multisectoral Kuwaiti team headed by Suleiman Al-Shahin, Under-Secretary for Foreign Affairs, and the United Nations mission, to discuss the modalities of work as well as data required.

The mission has also been invited to survey areas of the capital, including private and public properties, where damage has been particularly heavy, and to meet a cross-section of the affected population.

* * *

A follow-up meeting of United Nations agencies, convened by the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP), has established a task force with a 90-day plan to survey and assess the environmental damage of the Middle East conflict.

The cost of the task force was initially estimated at $2.5 million. It is hoped that the funds will come from donor countries, Governments of the region, non-governmental organizations, and the United Nations and its agencies.

Out of the survey and assessment will emerge concrete proposals on what to do about four separate but interlinked areas that require action -- pollution in the marine and coastal areas; in the atmosphere; terrestrial destruction; and hazardous wastes.

The meeting in Geneva allocated responsibilities to a dozen United Nations agencies and other international organizations, including the World Conservation Union and the Worldwide Fund for Nature.

Between 30 and 40 experts will carry out the initial necessary surveys and assessments leading to the action plan which will mitigate, or eliminate, the consequences of the environmental damage. They will be working out of the Kuwait headquarters of the Regional Organization for the Protection of the Marine Environment, which is to reopen tomorrow and which groups all eight countries of the region.

The action plan will go into effect within this week and will place a core team of experts in Kuwait by mid-April. Operations are expected to be in full swing a few weeks after that.

* * *

The second round of preparation for the 1992 United Nations Conference on Environment and Development began today in Geneva.

The Committee devoted to this task will, during its three-week second substantive session, consider strategies to deal with environmental issues that arise within the process of socio-economic development.

(more)

It will examine the underlying patterns of development which cause stress to the environment, and will seek agreement on measures to reconcile economic activities with the need to protect the earth.

Among other topics to be considered by the Committee is climate change, ozone depletion, transboundary air pollution, soil loss and drought.

* * *

The Director-General of the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO), Edouard Saouma, said today that consumers are entitled to safe food anywhere in the world, and urged harmonization of food regulations to promote liberalization in international food trade.

Opening an international conference on food standards, chemicals in food and food trade at FAO headquarters in Rome, Mr. Saouma emphasized protection of the consumer from invisible hazards of chemical contaminants, residues of pesticides and other harmful materials. He said food safety was important to developed and developing countries.

According to the Director-General, there must be concerted efforts to overcome present barriers to free trade, including non-technical barriers, between exporting and importing countries.

Organized jointly by FAO and the World Health Organization (WHO), in cooperation with the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade (GATT), the conference is attended by over 400 participants from about 80 countries and international organizations.

The conference, which ends on 27 March, will consider measures to ensure safer food and to remove obstacles hindering the annual $200 billion world food trade.

It is expected to come up with recommendations for an overall strategy for the further elaboration of basic scientific evaluations and general standards and requirements applicable to all foods.

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United Nations

Press Release

Department of Public Information • News Coverage Service • New York

Prepared by Central News

DH/850
19 March 1991

TUESDAY HIGHLIGHTS

- Under-Secretary-General Martti Ahtisaari reports of "extremely serious situation in Iraq".

- Iraq agrees to entrust Office of Secretary-General with exchange of Kuwaiti property.

- World Health Organization expresses concern about pollution caused by burning Kuwaiti oil wells.

* * *

The Spokesman for the Secretary-General told correspondents today that the head of the United Nations humanitarian mission to Iraq and Kuwait, Under-Secretary-General Martti Ahtisaari, was flying back to New York today to report to Secretary-General Javier Pérez de Cuéllar on the "extremely serious situation in Iraq".

The Spokesman told correspondents yesterday that Mr. Ahtisaari had not been able to proceed immediately to Kuwait, because of accommodation problems in particular. The Secretary-General had therefore asked him to return to New York to report to him first hand on the situation in Iraq. The Spokesman said the team travelling with Mr. Ahtisaari had been left behind in Bahrain waiting for the green light from the Kuwaiti authorities. Mr. Ahtisaari would be returning to Kuwait as soon as conditions permitted, he said.

Asked by correspondents about the contents of the report, the Spokesman referred to a press release issued today by the International Committee of the Red Cross stating that wider action for the area was urgently needed to avert famine in Iraq. Alarmed by the situation, the Committee was in close contact with the United Nations over the measures that needed to be taken.

The press release said further that the Red Cross was stepping up its food distributions to vulnerable groups in Iraq and that since January it had brought nearly 900 tonnes of food into Iraq from Jordan and Iran.

(more)

For information media—not an official record

The Committee said priority distributions were being made to hospitals and orphanages in Baghdad. It also planned to extend distributions to other areas as well.

The Spokesman said Mr. Ahtisaari's report was also describing the problems in Iraq as extremely serious with no electricity and fuel, and grave telecommunication and transportation difficulties.

* * *

Iraq has agreed that the Office of the Secretary-General should be entrusted with the receipt and delivery of Kuwaiti property. In a letter yesterday to the Secretary-General and the President of the Security Council, Iraqi Ambassador Abdul Amir Al-Anbari said Iraq was awaiting "the machinery decided upon" in order to deliver the confiscated property.

In a separate letter, Mr. Al-Anbari said that the catalogues of the assets of the Islamic Museum and the National Museum that were brought to Iraq from Kuwait were ready for submission to the authority that may be designated.

The Iraqi Ambassador also notified the United Nation about the situation of Kuwaiti aircraft. While seven had been destroyed by allied bombing, eight planes remained intact -- six in Iran, one in Oman and one in Iraq, he said.

* * *

The World Health Organization (WHO) has expressed concern about the extent of pollution caused by burning Kuwaiti oil wells.

A United Nations press officer in Geneva said today that WHO had reported that black rain had fallen on parts of Iran last week. The Organization said that pollution from the burning oil wells continued to increase the environmental health hazards in Jordan and the Gulf States.

The press officer said that WHO reported that destruction of sanitation, waste water and treatment facilities would mean an influx of solid and chemical waste into lands, rivers and sea that would further damage the already fragile ecosystem with serious consequences for health. According to WHO, she said, an urgent comprehensive survey was needed to assess the situation and to find ways of mitigating the effects of war on health and on the environment.

The press officer further reported that the Director-General of WHO, Hiroshi Nakajima, had just returned from a visit to three refugee camps in Iran. She said that Dr. Nakajima quoted Government sources in Iran as saying that there were 30,000 evacuees from Iraq reflecting a serious situation in southern Iraq. He said that the refugees appeared to be well cared for by the Iranian authorities.

(more)

United Nations relief supplies which had been prepositioned in the north of the country, where refugee arrivals had been anticipated, were being moved to southern Iran, the press officer said.

* *** *

CORRECTION: Monday Highlights erroneously refers to two different missions having arrived in Kuwait, indicating that the Secretary-General's humanitarian mission led by Under-Secretary-General Martti Ahtisaari had arrived in the country.

The headline should read as follows:

- United Nations special mission arrives in Kuwait; holds sectoral discussion with Kuwaiti officials and visits sites critical to its mandate.

The mission being described in the story is the special mission led by former Under-Secretary-General Abdulrahim Farah.

United Nations

Press Release

Department of Public Information • News Coverage Service • New York

Prepared by Central News

DH/851
20 March 1991

WEDNESDAY HIGHLIGHTS

- Secretary-General to report to Security Council on situation in Iraq.

- Crown Prince of Kuwait promises all necessary assistance to United Nations special mission currently in Kuwait assessing damage caused by Iraqi occupation.

- Office of the United Nations Disaster Relief Coordinator reports 70,000 cases of cholera in Peru. Peruvian Vice-President appeals to international community not to cut off trade with Peru due to epidemic.

- Special Committee against Apartheid to observe International Day for Elimination of Racial Discrimination.

* * *

A United Nations official announced today that Secretary-General Javier Perez de Cuellar will present a report by Under-Secretary-General Martti Ahtisaari to the Security Council tomorrow describing the "extremely serious" situation in Iraq.

The official said that the report painted "a grim picture of the situation faced by Iraqis following the war". He said Mr. Ahtisaari, who arrived in New York earlier today, would be returning to Kuwait over the weekend to complete his assessment of humanitarian needs in the country.

Also tomorrow, the Secretary-General will inform Security Council members of his choice for Special Representative for the Middle East. The Council will also discuss the mandate of the United Nations Peace-keeping Force in Cyprus (UNFICYP).

In a separate development, the Security Council's Sanctions Committee has described the economies of Syria and Djibouti as having been severely affected by the trade embargo against Iraq. Syria had informed the Committee that it had suffered national losses totalling over $2 billion, and Djibouti claimed to have lost over $140 million.

(more)

For information media—not an official record

The Committee has appealed to the international community to provide immediate technical, financial and material assistance to the two countries, and to United Nations agencies to help as well.

In other news, the Security Council has agreed to arrange the modalities for Iraq's return of Kuwaiti property through the Office of the Secretary-General in consultation with the parties. Council President Peter Hohenfellner of Austria informed the Secretary-General of the Council's agreement on the issue yesterday.

In a further development, Iraqi Ambassador Abdul Amir Al-Anbari has informed the United Nations of the situation of Kuwaiti military aircraft. In a letter to the Secretary-General and the Council President, he said 11 fighter jets had been destroyed, two damaged as a result of air raids, and 11 remained in good condition.

Regarding military transport planes, the Iraqi Ambassador said two had been damaged and one was in good condition. He reported that only two of nine helicopters were in good condition while the other seven had either been destroyed or were not working.

The Ambassador reasserted Iraq's right to Iraqi military property left on Kuwaiti soil. He said a number of tanks, vehicles and other military material had been left due to "the disorderly withdrawal" and a list would be presented at a later time.

* * *

Today the head of the United Nations special mission to Kuwait, Abdulrahim Farah, met Kuwait's Crown Prince and Prime Minister Sheikh Saad Al-Abdulla Al-Salem Al-Sabah along with other Kuwaiti government officials.

During the meeting, the mandate of the mission, its progress of work and the difficulties it is encountering in discharging its task were discussed. The Crown Prince expressed his appreciation for the United Nations and the mission, and promised to provide all necessary assistance to expedite its work, particularly logistical support.

Yesterday, Mr. Farah met with Sheikh Nasser Al-Sabah, Minister of State for Foreign Affairs, to review the progress of work of the mission and to coordinate its activities with the Kuwaiti Government and other groups working in areas of concern to the mission. Meanwhile, United Nations experts visited various damaged sites, such as government institutions; oil refineries; power plants; urban areas; and educational, financial, social and health institutions.

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According to a report by the Office of the United Nations Disaster Relief Coordinator (UNDRO), at least 70,000 cases of cholera have been diagnosed in Peru. So far 382 are reported dead as a result of the epidemic, the Agency said.

The UNDRO reported that although the number of cases was increasing and extending throughout the country, the proportion of deaths in relation to cases remained stable. Water and sanitation measures remained a priority, and international assistance was needed, the Agency said.

Briefing correspondents on the effects of the epidemic, the Vice-President of Peru said today that many countries had cut off trade with Peru due to the cholera outbreak. Referring to a report by the World Health Organization (WHO) on Peruvian fish produce, he said the WHO reported that there was no danger that the cholera could be exported from Peru. Fish caught in the high seas off the coast of Peru were not contaminated, he said. However, if they were brought in contact with vendors the possibility of contamination would increase. He called on the international community not to cut off exports of Peruvian products because of the cholera.

* * *

The Special Committee against Apartheid will hold a solemn meeting tomorrow 21 March, in observance of the International Day for the Elimination of Racial Discrimination, proclaimed by the General Assembly in 1966.

The annual observance coincides with the thirty-first anniversary of the Sharpeville massacre when South African police, unprovoked, opened gunfire on several thousand demonstrators who were peacefully protesting against apartheid laws requiring Africans to carry passes at all time.

The Special Committee has invited, among others, the President of the General Assembly, the President of the Security Council, the Chairmen of the relevant United Nations organs and Secretary-General Javier Perez de Cuellar to participate in the observance.

The Committee has also invited as special guests the Mayor of New York City, David Dinkins, and New Jersey Governor James Florio to speak on the occasion.

The Chairman of the Special Committee against Apartheid, Ibrahim A. Gambari (Nigeria), said in a statement that with the unfolding developments in South Africa, "the complex process of change in South Africa would give rise to a dynamic debate on the future of that country". Open debate was essential, he said, to help define both the basic aspects of a post-apartheid society and the incipient elements of what a true democratic system could be.

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United Nations

Press Release

Department of Public Information • News Coverage Service • New York

Prepared by Central News

DH/852
21 March 1991

THURSDAY HIGHLIGHTS

- Report by Under-Secretary-General Martti Ahtisaari on situation in Iraq calls for major mobilization of resources to deal with "deep crisis" in agriculture and food, water, sanitation and health.

- Secretary-General designates Edouard Brunner of Switzerland as Middle East Special Representative.

- Secretary-General says "historic opportunity" for negotiations on dismantling of apartheid in South Africa "must succeed".

- United Nations Resident Coordinators in Iran and Turkey call for additional funds to help Iraqi refugees arriving in the two countries from Iraq.

- Thirty-two Governments pledge $8.8 million to United Nations trust funds and programmes for southern Africa.

- Malawi appeals to international community for emergency assistance for 100,000 people affected by floods and land slides.

- Secretary-General's Special Representative for Afghanistan holds talks with Soviet authorities on settlement of Afghan conflict; meets also with Pakistani Foreign Minister.

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Secretary-General Javier Perez de Cuellar presented today a report to the Security Council by Under-Secretary-General Martti Ahtisaari describing the "extremely serious" situation in Iraq.

The report stated that a major mobilization of resources was urgently needed to deal with aspects of the "deep crisis" in the fields of agriculture and food, water, sanitation and health.

The situation also raised urgently the question of energy before immediate humanitarian needs could be dealt with. The report said the need

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For information media—not an official record

for energy included emergency oil imports and the quick patching up of electricity production capacity, in order to preserve and distribute food, purify water, irrigate crops, and distribute medicaments.

It was "unmistakable", the report concluded, that the Iraqi people might soon face a further imminent catastrophe, including famine and epidemic, if life-supporting needs were not rapidly met.

During consultations this afternoon Council members also discussed the mandate of the United Nations Peace-keeping Force in Cyprus (UNFICYP), and were presented with the Secretary-General's choice for Special Representative to the Middle East.

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Secretary-General Javier Perez de Cuellar today designated Edouard Brunner of Switzerland as Special Representative to the Middle East. In assuming the post, Mr. Brunner succeeds Gunnar Jarring who was appointed in 1967.

The appointment comes in response to resolution 242 (1967), by which the Security Council asked the Secretary-General to designate a Special Representative to proceed to the Middle East to establish and maintain contacts with the States concerned in order to promote agreement and assist efforts to achieve a peaceful and accepted settlement in accordance with the provisions and principles in the resolution.

A national of Switzerland, Mr. Brunner is at present his country's Ambassador to the United States.

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The Secretary-General said today in a statement that this year's International Day for the Elimination of Racial Discrimination was being observed at a time when the Government of South Africa had made serious strides towards dismantling the system of apartheid. Through negotiations, he said, it should be replaced with a system based on the principles of equality, democracy and the rule of law.

The process, however, would be complex and difficult, he said. The release of all political prisoners, and the return of political exiles without restrictions, were obstacles which would have to be overcome in the near future if the process of negotiations for a new constitution was to succeed.

The Secretary-General also expressed concern about the violence, and what he termed "the grave social injustice" inflicted by apartheid on the black population in South Africa.

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In closing, he said the most recent initiatives of President de Klerk, together with the statesmanship and the foresight displayed by the black leadership, were encouraging signs showing that a common vision for a new South Africa was materializing.

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United Nations Resident Coordinators in Iran and Turkey told correspondents in Geneva today that more money was needed to help refugees arriving in the two countries from Iraq.

According to a United Nations press officer in Geneva, the United Nations Coordinator in Iran had reported that there were now about 37,500 Iraqis in camps in the country. Between 1,500 and 2,000 were arriving daily and the numbers were increasing. The refugees -- mainly women and children and old men -- were in very poor physical condition.

The press officer reported that the Resident Coordinator in Turkey had called for another $3 million to urgently expand facilities to accommodate an expected 20,000 refugees from Iraq, in addition to the 4,500 Iraqi refugees who had already crossed the border to Turkey.

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Thirty-two Governments yesterday made pledges and contributions totalling some $8.8 million for various United Nations trust funds and programmes for southern Africa.

The donations were received by the Secretary-General at a ceremony held each year in connection with the International Day for the Elimination of Racial Discrimination. The Day commemorates an incident on 21 March 1960 in Sharpeville, South Africa, in which 69 peaceful demonstrators against South Africa's "pass laws" were killed and 180 others wounded.

In his opening remarks, the Secretary-General gave an overview of the United Nations funds for southern Africa and thanked Governments for their pledges. He said the steady flow of resources to the funds indicated the commitment by Governments to the cause of peace and well-being of the peoples of southern Africa.

Last year, 36 Governments contributed a total of $12 million to the increasing needs of the trust funds and programmes.

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The Government of Malawi today made an appeal for some $23 million for emergency assistance to help 100,000 people suffering as a result of floods and landslides in the country.

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The appeal was issued by the United Nations Disaster Relief Office (UNDRO) who reported that an estimated 1,000 people had died in Malawi as a result of the disaster.

According to UNDRO, schools, clinics, houses and bridges had been washed away and a considerable amount of roadway was nonfunctional.

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The Secretary-General's Special Representative for Afghanistan, Benon Sevan, has returned to Islamabad from Moscow where he held talks with Soviet authorities on a political settlement of the Afghan question. Since his return to Islamabad last Monday, Mr. Sevan has met with the Pakistani Foreign Minister and today he called on the President of Pakistan. Mr. Sevan will continue his consultations with Afghan resistance leaders over the weekend.

Meanwhile, the Government of Afghanistan has urged the Secretary-General to take immediate measures to prevent what it called "the grave consequences" that could come from recent Pakistani attacks on the country.

In a letter to the Secretary-General, dated 19 March, the Afghan Minister for Foreign Affairs, Abdul Wakil, said Pakistani forces had launched a rocket and artillery barrage followed by a ground offensive along the border earlier this week. He claimed his Government's right to self-defence, and said it would request an emergency meeting of the Security Council to deal with the situation if the attacks continued.

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United Nations

Press Release

Department of Public Information • News Coverage Service • New York

Prepared by Central News

DH/853
22 March 1991

FRIDAY HIGHLIGHTS

- Under-Secretary-General Martti Ahtisaari stresses importance of fuel and power in extension of urgent humanitarian relief to Iraq.

- Security Council's Sanctions Committee decides to lift embargo on civilian and humanitarian imports to Iraq.

- United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees to participate in voluntary return of South African refugees and political exiles.

- United States announces $5 million special contribution to United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East.

- Preliminary mission to assess human rights conditions in El Salvador concludes work.

- United Nations Development Programme approves $4 million Gulf crisis programme.

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Briefing correspondents today at Headquarters on the situation in Iraq, Under-Secretary-General Martti Ahtisaari said most important for the urgently needed humanitarian relief to the country was fuel and power.

He emphasized that without energy to drive generators, pumps and all kinds of mechanisms that any industrialized society depends upon, the relief effort would not provide for the urgent needs that now existed.

Mr. Ahtisaari presented his report to the Security Council yesterday and Council members were discussing it this afternoon.

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The Security Council's Sanctions Committee has decided to lift the embargo on civilian and humanitarian imports to Iraq. The Committee made its decision this afternoon on the basis of Mr. Ahtisaari's report.

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For information media—not an official record

The Committee said, in a statement, that circumstances had arisen in which there was an urgent humanitarian need to supply foodstuffs to Iraq in order to relieve human suffering. It said it would report promptly to the Council on its decision.

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The Government of South Africa has agreed, in principle, for the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) to participate in the voluntary return of South African refugees and exiles.

South Africa's Permanent Representative to the United Nations in Geneva yesterday informed the High Commissioner, Sadako Ogata, about her country's decision.

Mrs. Ogata told the press yesterday that she welcomed the "important" development, which, she said, would allow UNHCR to play fully its normal and traditional humanitarian role in ensuring that refugees and exiles could return under safe conditions. She said her Office was prepared to establish an adequate and effective presence in South Africa to discharge its responsibilities.

The UNHCR had earlier submitted to the South African Government a draft memorandum on the principles and modalities for the repatriation exercise. The process now hinges on the acceptance by both parties of a mutually acceptable agreement.

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The United States Government has announced a special contribution of $5 million to the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA).

The funds are earmarked for the Agency's emergency programmes for Palestine refugees in the Israeli-occupied territories of the West Bank and Gaza Strip.

An official statement issued in Washington, D.C., said that President George Bush had authorized the use of this amount from the Emergency Refugee and Migration Assistance Fund "to meet the unexpected urgent needs of refugees in the occupied territories".

The United States is the largest single-country donor to UNRWA's voluntarily funded education, health, relief and social programmes for some 2.4 million Palestine refugees. The country pledged $62 million to UNRWA's regular programmes for this year, in addition to a contribution of $4 million last year to help fund emergency measures.

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The preliminary mission which went to El Salvador on 13 March with the task of assessing the conditions prevailing in the country concluded its work today.

On its return to New York, the mission will present recommendations to the Secretary-General with respect to the establishment of a mission in El Salvador to verify the Agreement on Human Rights signed in San Jose, Costa Rica, on 26 July 1990, between the Government of El Salvador and the Frente Farabundo Marti para la Liberacion Nacional (FMLN).

During the 10 days spent in El Salvador, the mission met with members of the Government, the armed forces, political parties, religious institutions and non-governmental organizations. In addition, field trips were carried out in order to make a preliminary assessment of conditions in the conflict areas of Chalatenango, Morazan, Guazapa and Usulutan, where the mission met representatives of the FMLN.

The preparatory team was headed by Iqbal Riza, Director in the Office of the Secretary-General, with the assistance of Ricardo Vigil, Chief of the Preparatory Office in San Salvador.

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The United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) yesterday approved a Special Programme of up to $4 million to help identify and meet the urgent relief, rehabilitation and development needs of the countries affected by the Gulf crisis.

The Programme will respond to five major areas of need, including immediate humanitarian needs, primarily emergency relief in Kuwait and Iraq; immediate and medium-term human needs, especially the socio-economic reintegration of returnees; rehabilitation of institutions and infrastructure, particularly in Kuwait and Iraq; economic management, where necessary, to rechart socio-economic strategies; and environmental recovery.

For other affected countries in the Middle East, Asia, Africa and Eastern and Central Europe, Programme funds will be used to assist Governments to assess the impact of the Gulf crisis and to launch plans of action in critical areas, drawing on the expertise of the United Nations system.

The main challenge, according to UNDP Administrator, William H. Draper III, was to link the issues of peace, security and development in the post-war period, and, by so doing, "heal the wounds of war".

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United Nations

Press Release

Department of Public Information • News Coverage Service • New York

Prepared by Central News

DH/854
25 March 1991

MONDAY HIGHLIGHTS

- Secretary-General expresses "deep concern" about Israeli deportation orders against four Palestinian residents of occupied Gaza Strip.

- Under-Secretary-General Martti Ahtisaari arrives in Kuwait via Bahrain, aboard UNDRO plane carrying 24 tons of emergency relief items.

- World Food Programme provides emergency food aid totalling more than $52 million to seven African countries.

- Committee on Natural Resources begins twelfth session in New York.

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Secretary-General Javier Perez de Cuellar said today through his spokesman that he had learned "with deep concern" about the deportation orders issued against four Palestinian residents of the Israeli occupied Gaza Strip.

He said he had called upon Israeli authorities to reconsider their decision "in contravention of Article 49 of the Fourth Geneva Convention". The Secretary-General expressed hope that all sides would refrain from acts that could serve only to heighten tension in the area and undermine the confidence essential to positive dialogue and the start of an effective negotiating process.

In a related development, the Commissioner-General of the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA), Ilter Turkmen, has expressed regret about the Israeli expulsions saying that two of the four Palestine refugees threatened by deportation were UNRWA employees.

Briefing correspondents today on his new responsibilities as head of the specialized agency and his recent visits to Gaza, the West Bank and Jordan, he said the consequences of the Gulf war on the Palestinian population living in the occupied territories had been grave. Mr. Turkmen pointed out that the many curfews, imposed daily by Israeli authorities, had prevented Palestinians from going to work. UNRWA had therefore started emergency food distribution in the area to relieve the situation.

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For information media—not an official record

In other related news, the Government of Israel has categorically objected to the idea of convening a meeting of the parties to the Fourth Geneva Convention as advocated by the Secretary-General last December.

In a letter to the Secretary-General, dated 22 March, Israeli Ambassador Yoram Aridor called the proposal "an astonishing act of singling out Israel". In the 40 years the Convention had been in effect, he said, millions of innocent civilians had been killed, and the international community had not once called a meeting of the signatories to address the violations. He said Israel had undertaken to apply all the humanitarian provisions of the Convention on a de facto basis and a meeting of the parties would only politicize international humanitarian law and thereby undermine its effectiveness.

In other communications, the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO) has called on the Security Council to take action to ensure the safety of Palestinians in Kuwait.

In a letter, dated 21 March, transmitted to the Secretary-General by the Permanent Observer for Palestine, Nasser Al-Kidwa, the PLO said that violent and criminal actions were being continuously committed against the 150,000 Palestinians still living in Kuwait. Palestinians were being beaten, tortured to death, kidnapped by the thousands, and deprived of food and security.

In a similar letter to the Secretary-General, dated 20 March, Sudan has protested against the treatment of Sudanese nationals in Kuwait. Sudanese Ambassador Josep Lagu said that Sudanese residents were being subjected to atrocities, humiliation and inhuman harassment by what he called "irresponsible elements among the Kuwaiti people". He said reports indicated that at least one Sudanese national was murdered in cold blood in Kuwait City before the eyes of his wife who was later subjected to "indecent and inhuman treatment".

Mr. Lagu asked the Secretary-General to contact the Kuwaiti authorities for an investigation of the reported atrocities in the country.

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A United Nations official told correspondents today that Under-Secretary-General Martti Ahtisaari had arrived this morning in Kuwait via Bahrain, aboard a plane of the Office of the United Nations Disaster Relief Coordinator (UNDRO) carrying 24 tons of emergency relief items to be delivered to the Red Cross in Kuwait. Mr. Ahtisaari's mission was expected to end this week, he said.

Meanwhile, the mission headed by Mr. Abdulrahim Abby Farah continued to collect data relevant to its mandate from continuous meetings with Kuwaiti officials and Non-Governmental Organizations, by on-site visits and from land and aerial surveys, the official said.

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Emergency food aid worth more than $52 million will be provided by the World Food Programme (WFP) to seven African countries. Over 1 million displaced Liberian refugees and internally displaced persons will receive food aid valued at $47 million. In addition, emergency food aid totalling more than $5 million will be sent to drought victims in Mauritania, Sudanese and Ugandan refugees in Zaire, and Somalian refugees and asylum-seekers in Kenya.

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The Committee on Natural Resources began today its two-week twelfth session at Headquarters during which priority consideration will be given to the question of energy resources and their exploration, development and efficient use in developing countries.

The 34-member Committee, which is concerned with the exploration, development and management of energy, water and mineral resources, will examine reports of the Secretary-General on those issues. Among other issues covered by the reports are permanent sovereignty over natural resources; disaster prevention and mitigation in developing and utilizing natural resources; and the United Nations Revolving Fund for Natural Resources Exploration.

Established in 1970 by the Economic and Social Council, the Committee meets every two years.

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United Nations

Press Release

Department of Public Information • News Coverage Service • New York

Prepared by Central News

DH/855
26 March 1991

TUESDAY HIGHLIGHTS

- Security Council holds consultations to discuss safety of Palestinians in occupied territory.

- Under-Secretary-General for International Economic and Social Affairs warns against possibility of future energy crisis due to financial constraints of OPEC countries.

- Human Rights Committee hears call for measures to deal with countries failing to fulfil reporting obligations under United Nations human rights instruments.

- Intergovernmental Group Monitoring Supply and Shipment of Oil Products to South Africa urged to maintain sanctions until irreversible change occurs in country.

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The Security Council was scheduled to hold consultations late this afternoon to discuss a Presidential statement prepared by Austria on the recent expulsion of four Palestinians from the occupied territory by Israeli authorities. The Council President, Peter Hohenfellner of Austria, held bilateral consultations with the members throughout the day to discuss the statement.

In a related development, the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO) has called for immediate action by the Security Council to ensure the safe and immediate return of all expelled Palestinians. The request, contained in a letter to the Council yesterday, follows Israel's announcement over the weekend to deport four Palestinians from the Gaza Strip.

Transmitting the letter, the Deputy Permanent Observer of Palestine to the United Nations, Nasser Al-Kidwa, acting upon instructions from PLO, called Israel's decision a flagrant violation of the 1949 Geneva Convention, the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and various Council resolutions.

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For information media—not an official record

The Committee on Natural Resources, charged with promoting the exploration, development and management of the world's natural resources began its twelfth session yesterday, hearing a statement by the Under-Secretary-General for International Economic and Social Affairs, Rafeeuddin Ahmed.

Speaking of the energy situation, he said the recent Persian Gulf war had caused an additional oil import outlay of about $43 billion -- some $33 billion from the developed market economies, $2 billion from Eastern Europe and $8 billion from the oil-importing developing countries. The impact had been particularly felt in several countries of Eastern Europe and the developing world.

Energy projections to the year 2000 and beyond indicated a substantial increase in the demand for oil from the Organization of Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC), especially from the Gulf area, he said, because of stagnation in production in non-OPEC developing countries and the continuing reduction in oil output in the United States and the Soviet Union. He warned against the possibility of another energy crisis in a few years, as financial constraints in many OPEC countries affected their ability to expand production capacities. He stressed the need for international cooperation to ensure long-term stability in the oil markets, and the important role the Committee could play in promoting such cooperation.

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Steps have to be taken to deal with the problem of countries who do not fulfil their reporting obligations under United Nations human rights instruments.

That was the view expressed by a representative of the Geneva-based Centre for Human Rights, Enayat Houshmand, who opened the forty-first session of the Human Rights Committee yesterday at Headquarters.

He suggested that non-complying States parties should be reported to the General Assembly or should be offered technical assistance and training. Other steps being taken to deal with the problem of non-compliance, he said, included direct contacts with the representatives of the countries concerned.

Mr. Houshmand recalled that the General Assembly had approved last December the convening of a World Conference on Human Rights in 1993. The Conference would, among other things, review the progress made in the human rights field since the adoption of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights in 1948.

The Human Rights Committee is scheduled to review the periodic reports of Sweden, the United Kingdom, India, Panama and Sri Lanka during this three-week session which ends on 12 April.

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The Intergovernmental Group to Monitor the Supply and Shipment of Oil and Petroleum Products to South Africa, at its first meeting of the year, was told by its Chairman, Anthony B. Nyakyi (United Republic of Tanzania), that recent estimates of South Africa's foreign oil needs far surpassed the claims of the regime and demonstrated the potential effectiveness of the ban in the struggle against apartheid.

Other speakers emphasized the need to adopt a "cautious optimism" regarding recent changes in apartheid laws. They said sanctions in general, and the oil embargo in particular, must be maintained until profound and irreversible change occurred in South Africa.

The Intergovernmental Group was established by the General Assembly in 1986. Its 10 members are: Algeria, Cuba, Indonesia, Kuwait, New Zealand, Nicaragua, Nigeria, Norway, Ukraine and United Republic of Tanzania.

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United Nations

Press Release

Department of Public Information • News Coverage Service • New York

Prepared by Central News

DH/856
27 March 1991

WEDNESDAY HIGHLIGHTS

- Security Council deplores Israel's recent decision to expel four Palestinians from the occupied territories.

- Security Council hears oral report by Secretary-General saying current conditions for overall agreement between Cypriot and Turkish communities in Cyprus are "favourable".

- Twenty-one countries notify Council President of continued economic hardship, and financial losses totalling over $30 billion due to sanctions against Iraq.

- Food and Agriculture Organization sends emergency food aid totalling $17 million to vulnerable groups in Iraq.

- Colombia to host eighth session of United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD VIII), to be held in Cartagena de Indias next February.

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The Security Council this afternoon deplored Israel's recent decision to expel four Palestinian civilians from the occupied Arab territories, calling that action a violation of the 1949 Geneva Convention on the Protection of Civilians in Time of War. In a statement issued by Council President Peter Hohenfellner of Austria on their behalf, the Council members called upon the Israeli Government to desist in such expulsions and to ensure the safe return of those deported.

In the statement, which was formulated following consultations, the Council Members said they were "gravely concerned" by the deteriorating situation in the territories occupied by Israel since 1967, especially by the effects of the curfews imposed by Israel.

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For information media—not an official record

Earlier this afternoon the Council met in consultations to hear an oral report by Secretary-General Perez de Cuellar on his good offices mission on Cyprus.

In his report, the Secretary-General said the current conditions for an overall agreement were "favourable", and that it would be possible to reach an agreed outline in "a few months". He expressed hope that the clarifications that had emerged from the discussions over the past months would make it possible to advance on a number of issues.

The two sides -- the Cypriot and the Turkish community -- should now be able to work out an arrangement that would guarantee the security of both communities of Cyprus, and provide for the withdrawal of all non-Cypriot forces, the Secretary-General said. The powers and functions to be vested in the federal government were another area where it should now be possible for the two sides to come to an agreed position, he said.

Among the issues which still remained to be explored before an agreement could be reached, Mr. Perez de Cuellar said, were territorial adjustments, freedom of settlement and displaced persons. He proposed to report again to the Council by early July on the outcome of his efforts.

In a separate development, a United Nations official said earlier today that the Secretary-General had informed the Council last night that Under-Secretary-General Martti Ahtisaari's mission to Kuwait had ended. Mr. Ahtisaari would return to New York from Geneva where he was currently preparing his final report to the Council.

The official said that with regard to the special mission to Kuwait, the Secretary-General had indicated to the Council that the head of the mission, Abdulrahim Farah, had experienced many difficulties in carrying out his tasks, particularly because of the lack of communications systems. Mr. Farah had therefore decided to extend the mission for another week.

In addition, the official said, the Secretary-General had informed the Council of his appointment of the Assistant Secretary-General in the Department of Administration and Management, Richard Foran, to coordinate the return of seized Kuwaiti property.

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In a related development, 21 countries have notified the President of the Security Council of continued economic hardship due to the sanctions against Iraq.

In a collective memorandum, dated 22 March, the countries' Permanent Representatives noted that past appeals by the Secretary-General had not sparked a sufficient response, and called on the Council to renew its efforts to find a solution to the problem. The countries are Bangladesh, Bulgaria,

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Czechoslovakia, Djibouti, India, Jordan, Lebanon, Mauritania, Pakistan, Philippines, Poland, Romania, Seychelles, Sri Lanka, Sudan, Syria, Tunisia, Uruguay, Viet Nam, Yemen, and Yugoslavia.

A United Nations official told correspondents that the States, which had invoked article 50 of the United Nations Charter concerning resolution 661 (1990), had restated their firm determination to continue to comply fully with the provisions of the resolution in spite of the grave economic, financial and commercial losses incurred as a result of the sanctions. The countries claimed that the estimated total loss was more than $30 billion dollars.

The official said the Secretary-General had already appealed to the international community to provide immediate technical and economic assistance to the countries affected. He had also contacted the competent United Nations agencies and organizations including the international financial institutions and regional development banks to "review their programmes of assistance with a view to alleviating the present economic hardships arising from the application of the sanctions".

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The Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) announced yesterday that vulnerable groups in Iraq whose numbers have risen by 50 per cent because of the war would be provided emergency food aid worth over $17 million.

According to the Agency, local food production in Iraq represented only about 25 to 30 per cent of consumption requirements. Stocks of basic foods were reportedly being depleted, while cereals normally used for animal feed were now being used also for human feeding. Milk powder was exclusively being distributed to sick children on medical prescription.

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Colombia will be the host of the eighth session of the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD), to be held in February next year. The Board of UNCTAD decided last week to recommend to the General Assembly that Cartagena de Indias be the host city. Uruguay had originally offered to host the Conference but had since asked for the Conference to be held elsewhere.

The theme of the Conference will be "Strengthening national and international action and multilateral cooperation for a healthy, secure and equitable world economy". Singled out for special consideration are resources for development; international trade; technology; services; and commodities.

The President of the Board, Emilio Artacho Castellano of Spain, who will also chair the special session for UNCTAD VIII, said he saw in the Conference a good opportunity to pursue the dialogue that had been launched recently in other international bodies.

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